

"As JFK said, 'ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country,' and that is to serve. And, what your country can do for you is to help pay for your college or ease the burden of your student debt." - John B. Larson

- Fewer than one percent of Americans serve in the AmeriCorps, the Peace Corps, the U.S. Military, and other service organizations—combined.

- We know Americans want to serve. AmeriCorps alone turns away over 80% of the applications it receives simply because we lack the resources to accommodate all who hope to serve their country. We can and should do better.

- Seven years ago, President Obama signed the late Senator Kennedy's Serve America Act that sought to meet the demands of young people requesting to serve their country. We still are met with this high demand and believe that opportunities should exist for those who want to serve.



Contacts

For more information about the Larson Proposal visit:
www.larson.house.gov



Notes:

The Economics: Why National Service Is Worth It by Clive Belfield, Center for Benefit-Cost Studies in Education at Teachers College, Columbia University

National Service: Cost-Effectively Delivering Critical Service to Americans in Need a report by Voices For National Service, July 2010

GOP Should Prioritize Funding for Our National Service Programs, Target Point Consulting, by Michael Meyers

Washington DC Office
1501 Longworth HOB
Washington, D.C 20515
202-225-2265

Hartford, CT Office
221 Main St.
2nd Floor
Hartford, CT 06106
860-278-8888



America's Call to Improve Opportunities Now (ACTION) for National Service Act

Service organizations already help hundreds of thousands of Americans each year through disaster relief, education initiatives, conservation projects and public works projects to mention a few.

Prepared by the Office of U.S. Representative John B. Larson



President John F. Kennedy signing of the Peace Corps Bill
Photo Credit: Abbie Rowe, White House Photographs John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum, Boston.

My fellow Americans, ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country.
- John F. Kennedy

In 1963, President John F. Kennedy called for a national service corps "to help provide urgently needed services in urban and rural poverty areas." One year later, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed this pledge into law and created VISTA, Volunteers in Service To America thus beginning a modern era of national service where poverty reduction was addressed through civic responsibility.

ACTION

for National Service Act

ACTION for National Service Act will:

- Support at least one million federal service position per year—providing all who wish to serve the opportunity to do so;
- Expand and improve the educational benefit for national service volunteers;
- Ensure that national service volunteers' educational benefits are not subjected to tax penalties;
- Elevate the CNCS to a cabinet-level, independent agency -- the National and Community Service Administration.

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How ACTION will improve the economy, education, disaster assistance and the student debt

Cost Benefit of Service

- For every federal dollar invested in national service programs for youth and seniors, almost \$4.00 are returned to society in future benefits.

- The taxpayer pays 1.4 billion into national service programs. In return, the taxpayer receives extra income tax revenue and spends less on social programs to ameliorate disadvantage, poor health and other social ills.

Education

- City Year, a non-profit partner of CNCS deploys 17-24 year old full time Americorps members to partner schools to address students' attendance, behavioral and course performance challenges. City Year Americorps volunteers are able to use their near-peer relationships with struggling students to identify the cause of and address students' behavioral challenges.

- A 2009 comparison of students' literacy scores at three comparable Miami-Dade public schools revealed that students receiving City Year's interventions outperformed peers on standardized, interim assessments.

Disaster Assistance:

- Following the hurricanes of 2005, national service members leveraged 648,000 community volunteers to assist 3 million people, rebuild 2,000 new homes, serve 1.6million meals, and distribute more than 6,000 tons of food to disaster victims.

- In the wake of the 2010 Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill, Americorps NCCC members staffed volunteer reception centers, Senior Corps RSVP members recruited and engaged volunteers in coastal clean-up efforts and 500 Learn and Serve Summer Service participants helped with environmental restoration efforts.

- In May 2011, in Joplin, MO national service members were among the first to respond when a tornado destroyed most of the town and was the costliest tornado damage in US history. Within three hours of arrival to the disaster zone, the Americorps St. Louis Emergency Team established a call center for missing persons and were ultimately recognized for their responsiveness by Missouri House of Representatives.

Senior Corps:

- In 2010, Foster grandparents served 250,000 children. Research shows that 81 percent of children served demonstrated improved academic performance; 90 percent demonstrated increased self-image; 56 percent improved school attendance

- If service was expanded as expected through the late Senator Ted Kennedy's Serve America Act - the return on investment would increase. And as initial service induces further service and prompts others to participate, expansion would likely create a virtuous circle of investment.